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ABSTRACT

The authors present a framework depicting an evaluation-decision sequence, describe each of the evaluation stages, and note the relationships between evaluation information and subsequent decisions. In Chart I, the four major decision areas and the five kinds of evaluation which provide information for decisions in each of these areas are identified. It is hoped that this model for educational evaluation points out the importance of evaluation information in the process of improving educational programs and helping to ensure their success. The authors emphasize that evaluation should begin when an educational agency first looks critically at the potential of the educational process in its particular system and not after all attempts at improvement have been concluded. (Authors/AMM)

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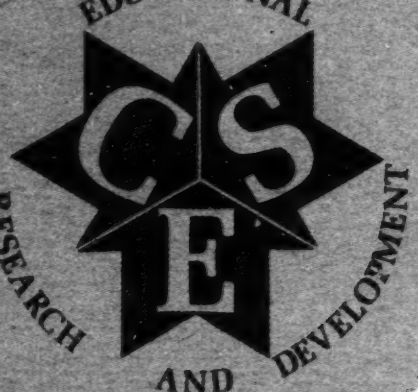

A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION OF TESOL PROGRAMS

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A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION OF TESOL PROGRAMS*

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*Paper delivered at the Convention of the Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in San Francisco, California, March 18-21, 1970.

This paper discusses a basic model for the evaluation of educational systems and instructional programs. A definition of evaluation is presented and a discussion of this definition will lead to the description of a decision oriented model for educational evaluation. Finally, the application of this framework for evaluation is applied to TESOL programs.

Definition of Evaluation

Most previous attempts to define evaluation have characteristically represented it either as a system of measurement and testing or the formulation of statements of congruence between performance and objectives, or of providing professional judgments. Since none of these definitions adequately provides the necessary information or includes the broad range of activities comprising evaluation, the Center for the Study of Evaluation, UCLA, has attempted to provide a more meaningful definition of evaluation by focusing on the necessity for meeting the information needs of decision-makers. The Center stresses the need for evaluation to consider not only the ultimate decision-making functions to be served but also the nature of the specific problem or situation (e.g., instructional program) under analysis. Within such a frame of reference, the Center prefers the following definition:

> *Evaluation is the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives.*

Decision Areas & Evaluation Requirements

This general view of evaluation has led the Center to a consideration of the total instructional improvement process in order to identify the normal sequence of educational decisions that might occur. The identification of the educational decision sequence provides insight concerning the kinds of judgments that decision-makers must make and their concomitant information needs. In Chart 1, which follows, four major decision areas are identified and the five kinds of evaluation which provide information for decisions in these areas. The decision areas are concerned with: (1) selection of the appropriate problem or objective to be served, (2) selection and design of the program to be introduced which best fulfills the objective, (3) modification of the program in terms of field conditions, and (4) certification of the appropriateness of the program for introduction elsewhere. The five evaluation areas listed are intended to provide information related to these decisions. In the succeeding paragraphs, each of these areas is examined.

Needs Assessment Evaluation (E_1)

It is generally a reasonable assumption that the decision-maker may be forced to make choices related to school or program priorities. For example, a decision-maker, given the scarcity of resources within his current situation, might want to make a decision about the problem area most in need of attention. This problem selection decision, in large part, is based on a needs assessment evaluation. Needs assessment attempts to

Chart 1

Decision Areas and Evaluation Requirements

Evaluation	Decision Area
Needs Assessment (E_1)	Problem Selection (D_1)
Program Analysis (E_2)	Program Selection (D_2)
Implementation Analysis ($E_{3.1}$) (Intervention) Process Analysis ($E_{3.2}$) (Intervention)	Program Modification (D_3)
Outcome Analysis (E_4) (Non-Intervention)	Program Certification (D_4)

examine the gap between goals and the existing state of affairs. The evaluative problem, therefore, is essentially one of assessing the needs of students, of the community, and of society in relation to the current status or accomplishments of the system.

Once he has been provided with this information, the decision-maker concerned with the instructional improvement process is able to select from among the alternatives those problem areas (objective dimensions) which need attention or modification.

Program Analyses Evaluation (E_2)

A second decision area of concern deals with program selection. Having made a decision about the specific problem area (or objective) in which his system is deficient, the decision-maker must choose between the existing program which is directed towards the achievement of that objective and various alternative programs that might be introduced to meet that objective. These choices, referred to as program selection decisions, are in large part based upon information provided in a program analysis evaluation. In this evaluation stage, generally, the evaluator is asked to provide information on the possible impact of the introduction of several alternative programs. His responsibility is to provide to the decision-maker, prior to a program's inception, information concerning the potential success of these programs. Thus, while it may appear that the evaluator's task is merely speculative, he must attempt, at the very least, to develop procedures for systematizing speculation. For

instance, review procedures for examining the quality of the program materials might be developed, or simulations and games might be utilized to examine, in microcosm, the potential impact of the various alternatives.

A program analysis evaluation is objective-oriented in that the alternative programs, including those which are developed during the evaluation, are being analyzed relative to their potential accomplishment of the desired objective(s). Moreover, potential attainment of other objectives (desired or undesired) are also a basis for consideration of programs.

When he has been provided with such information, the decision-maker must then make a judgment as to which program offers the greatest probability of success within his system. This decision, however, is not entirely dictated by the data which the evaluator has provided. Even though the evaluator should attempt, within his study, to be as cognizant as possible of the political and contextual variables which bound or restrict the nature of the ultimate decision, it is unlikely that he can become aware of them all. The program actually selected, thus, may differ somewhat from the one which looks best "on paper."

Implementation Analyses ($E_{3,1}$) and Process Analyses ($E_{3,2}$) Evaluations

Once he has made the decision to introduce a specific program, the decision-maker, throughout the course of the introduction of that program, must be in a position to make program modifications as demanded by the

situation. In order for the decision-maker to be able to make these program modification decisions, he must have evaluation information of various types. First, there is a need for information concerning the extent to which the program has been implemented in the manner presribed during the program selection and to the group for whom it was intended. This information is referred to as implementation analysis evaluation. Secondly, there is a need for the decision-maker to have information on the impact of the program on the educational process. This process analysis evaluation is intended to provide the decision-maker with information concerning the progress being achieved towards fulfilling the intended objective(s) as well as information on any unanticipated outcomes which might have been observed.

In an implementation analysis evaluation the emphasis is upon providing the decision-maker with information on the manner in which the program has been implemented. One relevant question is the degree to which that program, as described in the program selection decision, has been introduced. That is, has the program been introduced and is it operating in the pedagogical manner in which it was intended to be used? Furthermore, since the program selection decision was based on various assumptions about the nature of the student population to be served, if these assumptions were incorrect or are no longer appropriate, then this information, as a part of an implementation analysis evaluation, should be meaningful to the decision-maker in determining whether he should allow

the program to continue. Thus, the nature of the student population is another source of data in an implementation analysis evaluation.

In terms of these considerations, it is apparent that the evaluator, in this evaluation stage, does not consider the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

In a process analysis evaluation, the evaluator has been asked to provide data on how the program is functioning. For example, in terms of short range objectives, such as the intended objectives to be achieved at the end of a specific unit of study, what has been the performance of a given student group? Are there any observable unanticipated outcomes which, though not a part of the original objectives for the program, nevertheless ought to be considered as information potentially valuable to a decision-maker in making decisions about the program?

A process analysis evaluation is objectives-oriented. That is, the principal data obtained by the evaluator are progress towards the achievement of objective(s) and unanticipated outcomes.

The decisions related to implementation analysis evaluation and process analysis evaluation are likely to be in the form of program modifications which are made during the course of the program rather than decisions made at the conclusion of the program. The evaluative functions identified in the two types of evaluation leading to program modification decisions are designed to be interventionist in nature. That is, during these stages the evaluator is concerned with providing information regarding the modification and improvement of programs during the process of their introduction.

This function is directly opposed to the more passive role that might be assumed by a research-observer who, because of his desire to draw valid generalizable conclusions, is careful not to intervene in the process.

Outcome Analyses Evaluation (E_4)

After a program has been introduced and properly implemented into the system and has been modified in terms of whatever difficulties were observed, one may wish to make decisions about the program in its entirety and its generalizability to other situations. These decisions, which are concerned with whether the program should be eliminated, modified, retained, or introduced more widely, are referred to as program certification decisions. The evaluation associated with such decisions are referred to as outcome analysis evaluations.

In outcome analysis evaluations the role of the evaluator is modified from the interventionist stance previously described. In this stage of the evaluation it is imperative, in order to maintain the generalizability of the situation, that the evaluator not be actively involved in the program, and that he attempt to insure that drastic program modifications are not being made concurrently with the outcome analysis evaluation. Many procedures of experimental research would be applicable to such situations. It is the Center's view that the changing nature of educational systems as well as the necessity of having to deal with real world problems would make it extremely difficult to complete a pure outcome analysis evaluation.

Application of the Framework for Evaluation to ESL Programs

The ensuing discussion will try to describe examples of evaluation information and subsequent decisions for each of the evaluation stages previously described. It has been pointed out that decisions are associated with each of the five evaluation areas, and that it is the responsibility of the evaluator to provide the decision-maker with information that will assist him in selecting among alternatives for that particular decision. It has been emphasized in this paper that evaluation must be considered as a comprehensive process that applies to all areas of decision-making in education. At this point, perhaps, it should be mentioned that the evaluation function should take place whether or not a person with the title of evaluator is present. In many cases, the data collection, analysis, and reporting of information appropriate to a decision might be so easy to obtain or so tied to the making of the decision, that the decision-maker and his staff would perform the evaluation themselves.

The first question facing the decision-maker is related to making choices regarding priorities among the educational needs of the school community. The decision-maker might be presented with needs assessment information indicating that certain educational goals considered highly important by the school community are being inadequately met. One of these goals may be the development of an adequate self concept by students whose first language is other than English. The decision-maker, having made a decision about one specific problem area, must now choose between the existing program(s)

directed toward the achievement of this particular goal (if any program does exist) and various alternative programs that might be introduced. On the basis of program analysis information related to advantages and disadvantages of various alternative approaches, the decision-maker decides that a bilingual education program would best meet the identified needs of the children. At this point more detailed program planning would take place. A proposal for special funding may be one of the products at this time.

In the process of introducing the new program, the decision-maker can use implementation analysis information to make modifications as the situation demands. Thus, the decision-maker may learn that children are entering the new program with English language skills that are above or below that which was expected, making certain instructional plans and materials inappropriate. He may also find out that certain audio-visual aids required by the instructional program have not arrived from the manufacturer, that the full complement of bilingual classroom aides as required by the program have not been hired, or that 35 children per class instead of 25 have been assigned--again deviating from the original program plan, etc. With the help of this type of information, decisions can be reached regarding the implementation of the new program. It should be noted that, in each case, the decision-maker may or may not decide to change the operating program in favor of what the program plan states the program should be. He will be in the situation, however, of knowing the difference between what was said in the program proposal and what actually is being done.

Once the program has been implemented, the evaluator is asked to provide process analysis information related to how the program is functioning.

Here the decision-maker has the opportunity to make decisions that hopefully will result in improvement of the program while the program is still in operation (e.g. before the end of the semester). Thus, it may be learned that teachers are having difficulty using certain instructional techniques and are in need of further in-service training, or that students in a certain classroom may not be making satisfactory progress toward specific process instructional objectives of the program related to the goal of learning more about the history and culture of their native land. This is found to be due to a lack of understanding of the program's objectives on the part of the teacher. It becomes possible, therefore, for the decision-maker to modify the program while it is still going on and to increase the probability of success of the program.

Finally, the decision-maker must make decisions regarding whether the program in question should be eliminated, modified, retained or recommended for wider use. The outcome analysis evaluation information might include statements regarding the progress of students in the local program towards various program objectives, as compared to an equivalent group of students in a nearby school. The particular evaluation design used by the evaluator should make it possible for the decision-maker to make such statements as: "It was the high amount of individual attention provided by the 7:1 ratio of children to bilingual adults that made the difference in regard to objective #1 and not the XYZ audio-visual aids"; "ABC curriculum materials that were prepared by the teachers helped the project pupils perform better in relation to educational objectives #5-10 than did EFG materials"; "The average number of "tardies" of children in the experimental program was 50%

less than the average of the school." Decisions can thus be made as to which parts of the program, if any, to keep, which parts to modify, and perhaps most important, what to recommend to other schools regarding what works with which types of children. This kind of information is very helpful, of course, in developing or revising future program plans.

Summary

In the preceding pages a framework depicting an evaluation-decision sequence has been presented. Each of the evaluation stages has been described and the relationships between evaluation information and subsequent decisions have been noted. In Chart 1, the four major decision areas were identified and the five kinds of evaluation which provide information for decisions in each of these areas. It is hoped that this model for educational evaluation points out the importance of evaluation information in the process of improving educational programs and helping to ensure their success. It has been emphasized in this paper that evaluation should begin when an educational agency first looks critically at the potential of the educational process in its particular system and not after all attempts at improvement have been concluded.